

San Fernando Cathedral
San Antonio, Texas.

HABS No. Tex-34

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**ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...**

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bartlett Cocke, District Officer
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio, Texas.

SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Owner: Roman Catholic Church; Archdiocese of San Antonio; Archbishop
Drossarts.

Date of Erection: The cornerstone of the present church is dated
September 27, 1868.

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Present Condition: The present church is in excellent condition, having
been completely rebuilt between the years 1868 and
1873, and having been used since that time as the
headquarters of the Catholic Faith in San Antonio.

Number of Stories: The church itself is one story, the living quarters
are two stories.

Materials of Construction: The church has a concrete foundation, lime-
stone walls, concrete roof, white plaster,
on interior walls and ceilings, and floors
of pine. The building containing the living
quarters is a modern hollow tile and stucco
building.

Other Existing Records: "San Fernando"- Fred Chabot 1930
"San Antonio de Bexar"-William Corner
"Our Catholic Heritage in Texas" Vol. 3 Dr.
Carlos Castaneda 1936.
"Old and New San Fernando"-Father Camilo Torrente.

Additional Data:

A barracks building of the old presidio was used as the
original church of San Fernando. As the presidio grew, a more spacious
building was required for church services. On May 11, 1738 the corner
stone was laid for the first church building with all the pomp and cre-
mony attendant to such an occasion. It took eleven years to complete.
The plan was a Latin cross with transept and dome; the building was
built of solid rock.

In 1825 the building was partly destroyed by fire, and
it was 1841 before it was restored to its original condition.

The existing building, which is the new part of San
Fernando, was started September 27, 1868 and was completed October 6, 1873.

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At that time the old front, the heavy tower, choir and baptistry were torn down. The new building was not built in harmony with the Mission style of the old building. The church did not have the money nor time required to build the heavy, solid construction; for that reason the lighter, cheaper and more gracious adaptation of Gothic architecture was used in the reconstruction of the existing edifice.

Author: Jim Cummins

Jim Cummins.

APPROVED: Bartlett Cocke

Bartlett Cocke, District Officer.

Date: February 3, 1937.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

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7/26/37

San Fernando Cathedral
115 Main Avenue
San Antonio
Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TX-34

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Addendum to:

San Fernando Cathedral
San Antonio, Texas
(as recorded in the 1930s)

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to:

SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL

HABS No. TX-34

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Location: 115 Main Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Present Owner: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Present Use: Cathedral.

Significance: San-Fernando Cathedral is one of the important historic architectural monuments in San Antonio. A part of the present structure dates to the middle of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the present city of San Antonio and is, therefore, a significant artifact in the study of Texas eighteenth-century architecture. The building is on its original site and has been in continuous use for over two hundred years.

The later, enlarged part of the church, by far the larger and more noticeable, is an example of the Gothic Revival style of architecture of a relatively late date. Although the design is lacking in many respects, it is the work of Francis Giraud, a local architect, native of South Carolina, of French parents and French-trained in his profession. Giraud was the architect for the later San Antonio Ursuline Academy buildings and the old St. Mary's Church.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Began 1734; finished 1749.
2. Architect: The 1868-73 enlargement of the church was the work of the architect Francis Giraud.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The church has been owned by the Roman Catholic Church since construction.
4. Builders: For the 1868-73 enlargement of the church the following contractors were:

Patrick Walsh, masonry contractor
Thomas Carmichael, plaster contractor
Edward Kurha, painting contractor
Leroux and Cosgrove, roofing contractor

- B. Historical Context: The real beginning of San Antonio may be traced to the Teran-Massanet Expedition of 1691. This expedition was undertaken in that year for the purpose of carrying aid to and strengthening the first Spanish Mission established on Texas soil,

that of San Francisco de los Tejas, located in East Texas between the Trinity and the Neches Rivers. The expedition also had the responsibility of establishing other missions in Texas and of erecting permanent presidios with strong garrisons for the protection of the Missions.

The expedition was commanded by Don Domingo de Teran, the first appointed governor of the province of Texas. He was accompanied by Father Damian Massanet with a party of ten priests and three lay brothers as well as fifty Spanish soldiers. A great quantity of supplies, equipment, arms, food, seed and livestock were essential items introduced into Texas by the expedition.

On June 13, 1691, the expedition reached the San Antonio River, which was so named on that day because it was the day of San Antonio de Padua. The only inhabitants at the place were a large tribe of Payaya Indians who maintained a rancheria or pueblo there. The Indians called the area Yanaguana.

Although the site of San Antonio was very appealing to both Teran and Massanet, their plans carried them on to eastern Texas; and it was not until the eighteenth century that the site was inhabited by the Spanish.

In 1693 the East Texas missions and presidio were abandoned, and it was not until 1716 that an expedition was organized to establish a new presidio in the province to control the depredations of the Indians and the incursions of the French. This expedition, commanded by Captain Domingo Ramon, reached the area of San Antonio on May 14, 1716, and sent back favorable reports of the area. Father Olivares encouraged the Spanish authorities to establish a settlement at the site which would serve as a half-way post between the remote settlements of East Texas and those of the Rio Grande.

It is believed that as early as 1715 Spanish families were settled in the area. A presidio was established in 1716 by the Domingo Ramon Expedition, which was accompanied by St. Denis. The Queretaran Father Olivares began his missionary activities at that time in a native hut or jacal with several converted Indians; he called the establishment the mission of "San Antonio de Padua."

Don Martin de Alarcon was appointed Governor of Texas on December 9, 1716, and was vested with the responsibility of establishing a permanent settlement at San Antonio. At that time Father Olivares' mission of San Antonio de Padua was officially recognized. Alarcon was unable to organize his expedition until 1718, but in March of that year he received his final instructions to select a site for a village and capital on the banks of the San Antonio River and to erect there stone houses for soldiers' quarters.

Upon his arrival in San Antonio Alarcon found that ten soldiers with their families had previously settled at the site which he proceeded to constitute as the "Villa de Bexar." Olivares' mission had by then been named "San Antonio de Valero" in honor of the current viceroy,

the Marquis of Valero; the entire group of settlements was known as "San Antonio de los Llanos" and marked the beginning of permanent Spanish occupation in Texas.

This first settlement at San Antonio was apparently not recognized as a legal "villa" or city. It remained for the Marquis de Aguayo to earn the honor of establishing the first legally constituted civil settlement of San Antonio. Aguayo had commanded the Spanish expedition of 1719-1722 which had driven the French from Texas, and by this action reinforced the military strength of the province and thereby encouraged settlement by Spanish families in the province. It was Aguayo who emphasized his views to the King that to keep Texas it must be populated, and this must be achieved through the introduction of Spanish families rather than through the civilizing of the native Indians by missionary effort. The Indians had proven themselves unsuitable for the purpose of developing into dependable citizens. Aguayo, therefore, repeatedly emphasized to the King that he desired to settle some two hundred Spanish families from Galicia, the Canary Islands or Havana, and another two hundred from Gran Tlaxcala. These Spanish citizens by their political loyalty, religious fervor and civic industry would serve as examples to the indolent Indians and would do more for the development and protection of the province than any other alternative.

The Canary Islanders had long been a sure source of dependable colonial stock for the Spanish Crown; consequently, the King ordered that the four hundred families recommended by Aguayo should be selected from volunteers of the Canary Islands. His decision was also based on the facilities of transportation from there to Mexico.

Response from the Islanders in 1729-30 was meager, and only ten families (one of which was composed only of single men) consisting of fifty-two persons were transported to Veracruz. The families were taken to Quantillan, then to Saltillo arriving in January 1731. They were then escorted to San Antonio, arriving there March 9, 1731. Upon their arrival the Governor made a final list of persons and an inventory of property and conferred upon them the title of "Hijos Dalgos" or "Hidalgos," the title stipulated in the Law of the Indies to be conferred on the first settlers of a new city in the colonies.

One of the first acts ordered by Aguayo was a survey of the land and the assignment of suitable tracts to the families. Specific provisions were made for laying out the streets, blocks, plazas, public buildings and church. It was stipulated that a site for the church be chosen first, and all the other measurements were to be made extending from the threshold of the site of the church's doorway.

Don Juan Antonio Perez de Almazan was entrusted to carry out the order for laying out the plan of San Antonio. The viceroy's order of 1730 had directed that the center of the settlement be established at a point west of the previously established presidio (the site now called Military Plaza) and between it and San Pedro Creek. Almazan, however, determined that the area so stipulated was unsuited to the

purpose, for water was difficult to secure and no funds were allocated for this. Therefore, he chose a site east of the presidio. Almazan forthwith selected the spot of the church doorway and from that point laid out the Main Plaza and subsequently the remainder of the village in July 1731. The location of the doorway of the village or parish church, to be known as San Fernando Cathedral, was designated on July 2, 1730; and the villa was named "San Fernando" in honor of Don Fernando, King of Spain.

The settlers of San Fernando were instructed to worship in the chapel of the Presidio of San Antonio until they were able to erect their own parish church. Due to the urgent physical necessities of establishing the settlement, it was not until three years after the arrival of the colonists that the parish church was begun. The foundation stone was laid May 13, 1734.

An appropriation from the Royal Treasury was made for the erection of the church, but this had not been received at San Fernando by 1734. For this reason donations were solicited from the colonists and the soldiers of the Presidio. By 1738 over 600 pesos had been subscribed, but the sum was entirely too small for the project at hand. After repeated requests from the citizens, the Viceroy finally contributed 5,000 pesos from the Royal Treasury.

Little is known about the actual construction of the church. It is likely that the work was carried on sporadically until the structure was enclosed and made useable as a church. This was still not accomplished by 1746, for in that year an order was issued requiring the citizens of San Fernando and other residents of the area to assist in the work of finishing the church. Two years later in 1748 an additional 12,000 pesos were appropriated from the Royal Treasury by the Viceroy for the construction of the church. Finally on November 6, 1749, the church and cemetery of San Fernando received official blessing. The church was named in honor of Saint Ferdinand, ancestor of the King of Spain for whom the village was named.

It seems that the building was not well constructed nor overly endowed with decorative features. Fray Morfi who visited the San Antonio area in January 1778, thought little of it: "The church which was built at the expense of the Royal Hacienda, is large enough for such a place. It is already threatening to fall in ruins, though it is quite modern; and it is so much without ornamentation that the most wretched pueblo would have a much more decent one."

The church continued in use through the years but under varying circumstances of neglect which seem to have increased during the early decades of the nineteenth century. From the diary kept by the Rev. John M. Odin in 1840 it is determined that the church "was very much injured by fire in 1828" and partly repaired in the following years.

Odin had been sent to Texas as a result of a report compiled in 1839 by the Bishop of New Orleans, Rev. J. Timon, at the request of Pope Gregory XVI. Following the ravages of the Texas revolution in 1836

and the state of unrest and doubt that existed as a result of it, the Roman Catholic Church in Texas was in spiritual ruin. Having been conducted by officials of the Mexican Church until the Revolution, Texas was left with only two practicing priests; the others had been, of course, removed to Mexico. The two remaining priests, both at San Antonio, were notorious in the neglect of their religious duties and the abuse of their religious responsibilities. Odin was therefore instructed to proceed to Texas and begin the resurrection of the church, and more particularly to proceed to San Antonio and relieve the Mexican priests of their jurisdiction over the church of San Fernando.

Arriving in San Antonio in the summer of 1840, Odin found the church in a ruinous state, "its roof half gone, (it) was the resort of a thousand swallows all day long and of myriad bats at night." Little could be done at that time, however, and it was not until March 1841, that Odin was able to undertake the reconstruction of San Fernando.

Although the written record fails to document the appearance of the old church, there was a number of views, drawings and photographs of the building made during the 1850s. The walls were rubble limestone and lime mortar, much the same as the extant mission churches, and the exterior was stuccoed. Three buttresses on each side strengthened the nave walls. These had one off-set with weatherings at the off-set and at the tops. A plain parapet shielded the roof vaults. In plan the structure was cruciform with polygonal transepts and apse and had a low dome topped by a small lantern over the crossing. Only the south bell tower is visible in any of the views, and it is likely that the north tower was never erected. The front facade was an unbroken rectangle, the tower being in effect a cupola set on the southeast corner of the roof. The base was octagonal as were the walls, which were pierced with round arch openings. The roof was an octagonal pyramid set on an off-set octagonal base and capped by a small lantern. All of the walls were plain and without ornamentation. The only decoration was allotted to a rather simple doorway with its round-arch opening and heavy molded entablature above it. A low stuccoed wall surrounded the property.

The Rev. Odin recorded in his diary that he began repairing the old structure of San Fernando in 1841. From that time on the church has been in continuous use until the present day.

Around 11 p.m. on the night of June 16, 1858, a large crash was heard from the direction of the church; upon investigation it was found that the front quarter of the roof had fallen in taking with it the choir gallery and organ. As reported by the Herald, ". . . the front part of the roof had fallen in, crashing the organ to atoms and carrying the (choir) gallery with it to the ground. . . . no other damage (was) done. . . . On examination it was easy to see that the fall was occasioned by the rotting of the timbers of the roof, which were probably twenty or thirty years old."

By 1859 the church was apparently in need of a general refurnishing, for on May 6, 1859, the Herald noted:

Among the imports, or attempts of import, which we have noticed in our city, is the rejuvenating of the old Catholic Church. Its gray, old, monumental walls, were once pleasant to look upon - "grandeur still contending with decay". . . . But those gray old stones have been covered with plaster and whitewashed, repulsing the eye, reflecting in double distilled force the sultry sunbeams upon the passerby. And within the last few days, its dome and cupola have fallen into the hands of an artist who is trying the effect of every shade upon them, resembling in variety and display of colors, an Easter Egg. We patiently await the finale, as this last aggression may reach other parts of the building.

Strangely enough while these extensive restorations were underway, preparations to erect a new San Fernando were reported by the Herald on May 21, 1859:

Imposing Ceremony - the cornerstone of the Catholic Church, "San Fernando," intended to take the place of the old Mexican edifice, in course of erection by Messrs. Tynan & Tynan, was laid on Sunday evening, at 4:30 o'clock p.m. The ceremony was solemn and imposing, and was in presence of a large concourse of people. The inscription on the cornerstone reads as follows: "Eccel Tabernaculum Dei, Cum Hominibus," and in the vernacular means, "Behold, the Tabernacle or Dwelling place of God with Men." Inside of the stone the names of all the State officers elected by the people . . . as well as all our county officials . . . and various papers were deposited.

The particulars regarding the laying of a cornerstone in 1859 are not known. It is probable that the foundations for the new church were but that little else was done; all activity ended by the Civil War. The "Messrs. Tynan and Tynan" were Walter C. and his bachelor brother Edward K., natives of Kilkenney County, Ireland. They were stone masons in San Antonio, and it appears that they were perhaps responsible for the planning of the new church in 1859.

Work was resumed in 1868, and it seems that at that time the architect for the present building, Francis Giraud, was first called in. The family of Walter C. Tynan has preserved a handwritten document titled "Calculation of Masonry in the addition to the Church of San Fernando--on the Main Plaza in San Antonio." This three page manuscript refers solely to additions to the foundation courses. From this it seems reasonable to assume that Giraud adopted the previously laid foundations of the Tynans', but he had them strengthened according to his own calculations in order to successfully carry the superstructure of his design.

Charles Barnes has printed the popular myth that Giraud's plans "were lost and those of another substituted for them when the sacred structure (San Fernando) was restored." However, it is only necessary to turn to a contemporary news account, the report on the

consecration of the church in the Herald, October 7, 1873, in order to refute this myth. As stated by the Herald reporter, "The plans, drawings, and specifications were furnished by the Hon. F. Giraud, now Mayor of San Antonio."

Giraud, the son of Francois Giraud of Bordeaux, France, was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1818. He received his early education at Emmittsburg, Maryland; later in 1838 he attended the Ecole Centrais des Arts et Manufactures in Paris, where he received his diploma as an engineer.

During his career, Giraud served in the capacity as City Engineer from 1849 to 1853 and as a surveyor most of his life; in 1848 he established the boundaries of the old mission lands and in 1852 the boundaries of the city of San Antonio. In addition to his design of San Fernando he was also the architect for St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's College and for parts of the Ursuline Academy. He served as Mayor of San Antonio from 1872 until 1875 and died May 8, 1877.

Following the resumption of the work of erecting the new San Fernando church, which consisted of going back and reworking the foundations laid in 1859, the old cornerstone which had been laid in that year appears to have been removed and then relaid "with impressive ceremony" on September 27, 1868.

Shortly over a year later the Herald of January 31, 1870, reported on the progress of the new work:

Beautiful & Substantial - The Catholic Cathedral now in construction on Main Plaza will be, when completed, an ornament to our city & an enduring monument to the liberality & energy of the Catholics who contributed the money to build it. It will probably be the largest & finest Cathedral in the State. For the beauty & granduer in the front of the bldg. Mr. Welch (sic) should receive the praise, and for the other part of the work, Mr. Tynan deserves the credit, we are not speaking of those who plan, but those who execute the work.

As was often the case in the erection of church buildings, the necessary building funds had to be supplemented from time to time by the proceeds of church sponsored social events. In June of 1872 it was announced that a Fair was to be held August 10-15, 1872, "to raise funds to finish the cathedral."

Upon commencement of the erection of the new church it had been decided that the old structure should remain in use for as long as possible. This was facilitated by the fact that the new construction would be far larger than the old and could, therefore, be erected around it. Although not yet documented, F. C. Chabot in his book, With the Makers of San Antonio, has related that the "old main dome" was destroyed in April 1872, and the old front of the church was razed July 3, 1873.

Finally, the church was sufficently completed, and it was consecrated on October 6, 1873.

The new church being much wider than the old one, the walls were erected over the old ones, thereby retaining the use of the old church for as long as possible. By 1872 it was reported that the work was nearing completion, but funds were apparently in short supply. The church was not finished at that time, however. The interior walls, although plastered, were left "neatly tinted, and ready for imitation frescoing should that be determined upon." On the exterior the south tower was completed only to the base of the belfry, and small decorative details were left unfinished.

It was reported at the time that it was the intent of the design that both towers were to be identical in appearance and capped by wooden spires twenty-five feet high. It was also intended to eventually raze the remainder of the old church, the transept crossing and apse would "give place to modern architecture."

The report of the Daily Herald, titled "Consecration of San Fernando Cathedral," read in part as follows:

"The quaint and antique structure that a few years ago stood between the two Plazas has almost entirely disappeared. It has served its purpose from 1788 as a place consecrated to religion, but it has given place to a larger and statelier edifice, in size better adapted to the accommodation of the increased population in our immediate vicinity, in architecture more in keeping with the tastes of the age in which we live. and yet, the voiceless old church of San Fernando and its companions, the several missions below us on the river, have all their stories to relate, and are mute but incontestible chroniclers of history. They tell us of a period when the section of country we now inhabit was so densely populated that they needed all these places for the practice of their devotions, they tell us of the Spanish priests who came, at every hazard, among the aborigines to unfold to them the mysteries of religion, and they attest what must have been the result of their influence, their example and their eloquence. Their very architecture and defaced decorations will serve to remind the progressionist that perhaps mankind has not made such tremendous leaps in either the arts or the sciences as he has been disposed to concede without question.

The ancient records of Texas tell us that the subject of the construction of the old edifice was first considered in the Royal Presidio of San Antonio de Bexar, February 17, 1738. Don Prudeucio de Orobio Barterra being Governor and Captain General of the State of Texas, and Don Juan Rezio de Leon being Curate, Vicar and Ecclesiastic Justice of the town of San Fernando (without the Presidio of San Antonio). It was resolved that this Parish Church should be erected under the invocation of the Virgin and our Lady Guadalupe. Many names, which are to this day well known in San Antonio, appear in the list of contributors to the construction, among which we may mention those of Leal, Rodriguez and Delgado.

The old structure had served its purpose long and well, and it was not without pangs of regret that those to whom it had become endeared learned that it had been doomed to demolition. Only a portion of the old chapel now remains to remind us of it, and in a few years, when the ultimate intentions of those in charge of the edifice shall have been carried out, that, too, will give place to modern architecture.

The foundation of the new structure was laid in 1868, the corner stone on the 27th of September of the same year.

The plans, drawings and specifications were furnished by the Hon. F. Giraud, now Mayor of San Antonio. The contract for masonry was awarded to Mr. Patrick Walsh, who carried the work to its present advanced state toward completion. The plastering was done by Mr. Thomas Carmichael, who has left the walls neatly tinted, and ready for imitation frescoing should that be determined upon. The painting was done by Edward Kurka, and the roofing (tin both above and below the sheathing) was done by Leroux & Cosgrove. The two towers will be identical in appearance, and will be finished with wood twenty five feet higher than the one on which the masonry work has been already completed. The masonry between the towers will be carried twelve feet higher and will be very ornamental.

. . . The Consecration took place (yesterday) at 8-1/2 A.M. immediately before Mass. The Cathedral was blessed and sprinkled with holy water, inside and outside, in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators. During the ceremonies a sermon was preached in Spanish by Rev. Father Artola, from Mexico. He dwelt with earnestness upon the sanctity that invested the structure as the house of God, and the reverence that should characterize those who visited it.

He was followed by Father Johnston, in English, who most eloquently referred to the fact that the Church had been built on hallowed ground, eminently Catholic and pre-eminently Spanish, and that the finest site in San Antonio had been given to the service of God. He paid a glowing tribute to those pioneers of Christianity who first planted its banners in Texas and erected the old structure, and said that the present noble edifice was a credit to the present generation in San Antonio, and that it was not the love of gold, but it was religion - the love of God, the poetry of life - that had fired the hearts of the early missionaries who had come to this country. He said that all nationalities could assemble under its roof, and that a feeling pre-eminently Catholic would actuate those most interested in San Fernando. We regret that we have not space enough to do better justice to the remarks of Father Johnston.

In the afternoon the vespers were sung, after which was the Benediction.

The church, though far from being completed, will henceforth be open for services."

The south tower appears to have been completed in the early part of this century, but to date neither of the originally intended spires has been erected. The portions of the old church are still intact and may still be seen on the interior behind the present altar.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The edifice is a typically Catholic church with a typically Catholic cruciform plan. The use of Gothic Revival styling is also typically Catholic.
2. Condition of fabric: Good, although in need of minor maintenance and repair.
3. Overall dimensions: Approximately 75' x 180'; 30' to eaves.
4. Foundation: Masonry and lime mortar.
5. Walls: The walls of the older part of the church are believed to be masonry, but due to inaccessibility this cannot be determined. The later walls, dating from circa 1870, are ashlar blocks of local cream-colored limestone set in lime mortar. The blocks were dressed with chisels, and the tool marks are visible.

The nave walls are reinforced by stone buttresses located at each intersecting point of the interior bays. These are rectilinear in section and have two off-sets with corresponding weatherings, the upper in four overlapping planes, the others of two.

There is no trace of stucco, but it may have been intended.

6. Structural system, framing: Load bearing exterior walls are reinforced with off-set buttresses. The roof and the clerestory walls are supported by stone piers. The roof system has wood rafters, painted and exposed, and are reinforced with large wood knees and with struts in the side aisles.

The crossing, transepts, apse, and one or two nave bays of the old church are still standing. The crossing was spanned by a dome on a drum that was little more than a ring. This dome has been replaced by the present one, also on a ring-drum and with plain pendentives; round arch rings support the dome. The old nave bays now forming the chancel are spanned by tunnel vaults, but it is difficult to determine if these are original. Another curious feature of the chancel is that the tunnel vault is stilted.

The nave arcade is composed of octagonal section stone pillars with cavetto molded capitals and an off-set terrazzo base approximately three feet high, supporting a series of wide lancet arches.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are three doorways on the east (front) facade, all of compound lancet arches.

The center doorway arch is defined by a projecting molding on the extrados of the outer arch ring. This ring springs from molded imposts on plain jambs. The center arch ring is plain; the inner one, again, springs from molded imposts. Two flanking buttresses terminating in pinnacles define the doorway. A decorative horizontal weathering defines the upper edge. A quatrefoil is carved in relief in the spandrel on either side of the arch of the opening.

The tower doorways are similar to the center doorway but differ in that the arch rings are somewhat heavier and the outer rings lack any extrados molding. The inner rings have no molded impost blocks. These doorways are also located between buttresses but are terminated with a gable coping having a decorative cross at each apex. A trefoil is carved in relief in the apex of the tympanums.

Each of the doorways is divided by horizontal wood transom bars and is further subdivided by wood tracery into two lancet arches with stained glass panes. The heavy wood doors are paired, inward opening; they are of diagonal tongue and groove boards, painted dark brown.

- b. Windows: The aisle window openings are lancet arches with the plain stone arch-ring projecting from the face of the wall. A center stone mullion divides at the impost level creating the effect of two lancet arches contained within the one. The windows are stained glass.

Secondary openings occur on the east facade at the second floor level; all are lancet-arch shaped and filled with stained glass. Similar openings occur on the north and south walls of the respective towers.

In the center of the east facade is located a round window with a simple compound receding frame and divided by plain spokes or bars all joining a multifoil circular ring at the center of the window.

Another circular window, filled with stained glass, is located in the west gable.

Each of the upper stages of the towers has a louvered opening treated as double lancet window openings with interlocking arches. These openings have compound weatherings at the sill level.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The nave roof is gabled with metal covering. The roof over the aisle section of the church is lean-to, also with metal covering. The dome is covered with bright yellow-patterned ceramic tiles.
- b. Towers: The two towers are identical in treatment, with the upper roof stages separated from those lower by plain, small stringcourse. Resting on the stringcourse are large pseudo dentils behind which rises the large cavetto cornice. Above the cornice is a yet higher stage of the tower, metal clad with two projecting pseudo waterspouts. Above the simple molded cornice of each is the roof, which is low-sloped, hipped, metal-clad with a cross at the apex. Four plain pinnacles at each corner of the tower roofs complete the design.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: As previously mentioned, the plan is cruciform. The plan of the original church includes the apse and the chancel. To the west of the original church is a later building used as a church office. The new church has a six-bay nave, side aisles, and a vestibule. Above the latter is the choir balcony which is enclosed by a wood and glass screen.
2. Stairway: A spiral staircase is located against the east wall at the point where the north tower joins the narthex.
3. Flooring: Modern terrazzo flooring of different colored panels. Metal strips separate the panels.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls have a modern glazed tile dado approximately five feet high, above which they are plastered and painted gray.

The clerestory walls, as well as the west nave wall, are painted in muted colors with various scenes and patterns.

Small sculptured religious scenes are located on the aisle walls the length of the aisle. The ceilings are painted in panels with various Gothic motifs, such as quatrefoils.

5. Openings: The entrance vestibule doors are wood with glass and wood panels, with quatrefoils, cusped arches and Gothic motifs.

The doors to the confessional are modern flush-type.

6. Trim: Plain wood trim around window openings.
7. Hardware: None notable.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: Forced air system.
- b. Lighting: Electrical fixtures.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: Situated on the west side of the Main Plaza in the heart of the present business district, San Fernando occupies one of the prominent sites of the city. There is little space along the sides or across the back, as the building occupies almost the entire site. There are iron fences across the front and down the sides.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

San Fernando, Venerable Church, unpublished essay, no date.

San Antonio Conservation Society Files.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Newspaper articles:

San Antonio Daily Herald: June 17, 1858
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San Antonio: Guessaz and Ferlet Company, 1910.

Parisot, P. F. and Smith, C. J. History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas. San Antonio: Carrico and Bowen, 1897.

San Fernando. San Antonio: Naylor Printing Company, 1930.

Spell, Lota M. "The Grant and First Survey of the City of San Antonio." Southwestern Historical Quarterly (No. 1, 1962): 73-89.

Chabot, F. C. With the Makers of San Antonio. Published 1937 in San Antonio, publisher unknown.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director of Bexar County
Architecture Survey
1969

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1968, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, Chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermesen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Convent buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., Director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress. Dewey G. Mears of Austin, Texas took the documentary photographs of the San Antonio structures.